

## Introduction

The Northern Neck, encompassing 8,200 square miles, is a special and unique place in the Commonwealth. The region is a tapestry of farms, vast tracts of forest and tidal saltwater fishing spots. Unspoiled wetlands and tidal creeks and marshes entice canoeists and kayakers to enjoy the solitude. Captain John Smith was perhaps the Northern Neck's first tourist and called the area "a place heaven and earth never agree more to man's habitation." Some years later George Washington referred to the Northern Neck as "the Garden of Virginia." The region is steeped in history, attracting tourists to historic villages and offering opportunities to learn about marine lore in the waterfront villages of Reedville and Irvington. Tourism, outdoor recreation, history and the natural resources of the Northern Neck beckon visitors and residents eager to escape urban life and the sprawl of suburban growth.

Historically, the regions surrounding the Northern Neck have seen unprecedented growth and urbanization, while the Northern Neck still remains among the least-developed areas in the Tidewater region of Virginia. Development pressures from more urbanized areas and the attractiveness of the region for retirement continue to influence population increases. Overall population growth in the 1990s was 11.7 percent compared to 14.4 percent statewide. Most of the growth in the Northern Neck was due to in-migration. The population growth rate for the region is expected to be approximately 16 percent during the period from 2005 to 2020 (the 2005 population of 49,353 is expected to grow to 57,200 by 2020). A commitment to resource based tourism and to the quality of life in the area will help maintain the Northern Neck's character and the economic stability of the region.

The Potomac and Rappahannock rivers and the Chesapeake Bay form three of the boundaries for the Northern Neck Planning District. The region includes four counties: Lancaster, Northumberland, Richmond and Westmoreland, and it consists of 492,800 land acres and 42,433 water acres. Six towns are located within the region: Colonial Beach, Irvington, Kilmarnock, Montross, Warsaw and White Stone. There are more than 1,000 miles of shoreline, which comprise 38 percent of the total Tidewater shoreline in Virginia. Wetlands cover 37,890 acres of the region. Water-related and other natural resources are abundant, making this region one of the most important for environmental and conservation planning in the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

Recommendations applicable to all regions are found in chapters III through IX. To meet needs established in the 2007 *Virginia Outdoors Plan* (VOP), it is important to integrate these recommendations with those that follow for Region 17 into regional and local planning and development strategies.

## Outdoor recreation

For a general discussion of outdoor recreation trends, issues and planning considerations in Virginia, see Chapter II: Outdoor Recreation Issues, Trends and Survey Findings, and Chapter VII: Outdoor Recreation Planning and Related Issues.

The Northern Neck Tourism Council maintains a comprehensive list of outdoor recreational opportunities at [www.northernneck.org](http://www.northernneck.org).

As indicated in the 2006 *Virginia Outdoors Survey* (VOS), the most popular outdoor activities in the region are related to utilization of water resources and beaches along with walking and bicycling trails (see Table X-17). Fishing ranked highest among the water-related activities, followed closely by swimming and boating. Survey respondents indicated that public access to water is lacking, especially with a projected increase in tourist numbers. There is a similar insufficiency in trail miles available for walking, hiking, bicycling, jogging and horseback riding. Public swimming pools and playgrounds (separate from those associated with local schools) are also among desired community amenities.

As localities in this region plan for future outdoor recreational needs, the inclusion of small neighborhood parks, larger regional facilities, and trails linking communities and water access points should be considered. Residents also express interest in adding playgrounds, public swimming pools and bicycle facilities. Trails, blueways and greenways linking existing recreational, historic, cultural and natural resources would increase the number of trail miles suitable for walking, bicycling and boating. In addition, continuing to promote linkages between historical, scenic and cultural resources is supported by statewide survey

results, which indicate that visiting historic sites is second only in popularity to walking for pleasure.

One of the largest voids in parks and recreation departments in Virginia is in the Northern Neck region. None of the counties employ a full-time parks and recreation director. These localities have turned any recreation programming over to private service providers. While private organizations may provide recreation programming in the short term, they are not charged with planning for the long term recreation, park and open space needs of this community. With populations anticipated to increase in each of the four Northern Neck counties, this is a troubling trend.

According to the Commonwealth of Virginia Auditor of Public Accounts, *Comparative Report on Local Government Revenues and Expenditures* (year ended June 30, 2005), per capita spending on parks and recreation for each county in this region was: Westmoreland \$10.33; Richmond, \$40.59; Northumberland, \$3.88; and Lancaster, \$6.52. This compares to statewide per capita spending on parks and recreation of \$55.31. Breaking these numbers down, the average spending per capita for towns was \$85.51; for counties, \$43.75; and for cities, \$76.45.

### Land conservation

Federal land holdings include the Rappahannock River Valley National Wildlife Refuge, managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the George Washington Birthplace National Monument, managed by the National Park Service. State conservation lands include four natural area preserves and Chilton Woods State Forest. The region has two state parks protected for outdoor recreation and conservation: Belle Isle State Park on the Rappahannock River and Westmoreland State Park on the Potomac River. A detailed discussion on statewide awareness of the need for conservation of farmland, parks, natural areas, and historical and cultural resources is found in Chapter III: Land Conservation. Conservation lands in the region are shown on Map 34.

#### Land Trusts Operating in Region 17:

- Virginia Outdoors Foundation
- Northern Neck Land Conservancy
- Chesapeake Bay Foundation
- Potomac Conservancy
- APVA Preservation Virginia
- The 500-Year Forest Foundation

Land conservation recommendations include:

- Property owners and local agencies and organizations should continue to work with land trusts to protect important private land holdings to expand the conservation base in Region 17 for the protection of wetlands and water resources.
- Land trusts should obtain additional easements to buffer the Rappahannock River Valley Wildlife Refuge.
- Local residents, agencies and organizations should pursue conservation measures to protect water quality and the health of adjacent riparian lands along Cat Point Creek and the Corrotoman River.
- Local and regional agencies and organizations should implement recommendations from the Northern Neck Land Conservation and Cultural Action Strategy to establish a land conservation program.

### Green infrastructure

Information about green infrastructure is found in Chapter IV: Green Infrastructure. Regional recommendations for green infrastructure include:

- Local and regional agencies should become informed and educate constituents about green infrastructure planning, including guidance on local zoning initiatives for changing community design and transportation systems.
- Stakeholders, including local governments, the Northern Neck Planning District Commission, the Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission and other interested entities, should form a regional partnership to address green infrastructure.
- Local and regional agencies should pursue Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program support for green infrastructure initiatives for the region.

### Programs

The following recommendations integrate statewide program initiatives into responsive regional strategies for outdoor recreation and conservation. The statewide program areas addressed in this section include: trails and greenways, blueways and water access, historic and landscape resources, scenic resources, Scenic Highways and Virginia Byways, scenic rivers, watersheds, environmental and land stewardship education, and the private sector. Recommendations are bulleted or numbered and are not sequenced by state or local priorities. Numbered recommendations are site specific to the regional map at the end of this section (see Map 35).

## Trails and greenways

For more detailed information, see Chapter VII: Outdoor Recreation Programs and Initiatives, Greenways and Trails.

### Statewide trunkline trails

**1** Local and regional agencies and organizations should implement the **Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail** (PHNST).

- Northern Neck Heritage Trail is part of the PHNST.

The PHNST connects the outstanding natural and cultural features along a 700-mile corridor of the Potomac River from the Chesapeake Bay to the Allegheny Highlands. The National Park Service (NPS) manages this partnership, which has been the target of significant investments in funds, time and expertise by individuals, organizations and government agencies. The PHNST could become the thread from which a vibrant environmentally-based economic development strategy can be woven, tying together existing historic and natural resources such as the George Washington Birthplace, Westmoreland State Park, Caledon Natural Area and the Steamboat Era Museum in Irvington. The PHNST should be incorporated into local comprehensive plans. Water trails and land trails would provide opportunities for boaters, kayakers, canoeists, hikers and bicyclists to move between key tourist destination sites.

### Other Trails

**2** Local and regional agencies and organizations should complete a **water trail** and **bicycle route** from the **George Washington Birthplace** to **Mount Vernon**. Alternatives to protect scenic resources along these multiuse corridors should be explored.

**3** The James Monroe Foundation should develop a parking lot, trails and interpretive sign at **Monroe's Birthplace** in Westmoreland County, and they should work with local and regional agencies to connect the birthplace with the town of Colonial Beach via a bicycle-walking trail.

**4** Local and regional agencies and organizations should establish a specific route for **bicycling between northern Stafford County and the Town of Reedville** in Northumberland County with extensions to Caledon Natural Area and to Irvington. This will serve as a connecting route to the PHNST.

## Water access

A discussion of the water access in the Commonwealth can be found in Chapter VII: Outdoor Programs and Initiatives, Water Access and Blueways. Water has always been key to life in the Northern Neck, and water access should be a high priority for public acquisition. The accessibility of the Northern Neck's water resources for all citizens and visitors is paramount to the economic stability and aesthetic appeal of the quality of life the region offers. Statewide, water access is one of the highest recreational demands in Virginia, with fishing ranking seventh and boating ranking tenth in popularity. State agencies should work with the Northern Neck Public Access Authority to obtain funding for additional public access sites, especially at previous ferry landing locations.

Water access recommendations include:

- Regional and local agencies should establish cooperative agreements among localities, other agencies and private landowners to meet the increasing need for public access to recreational waters and along blueways including the Northern Neck Blueway and the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Scenic Trail.
- Regional and local agencies should identify strategies to make additional waterfront resources available for public use.
- Regional and local agencies should provide adequate support facilities and services, such as restrooms, concessions, parking and maintenance for existing and proposed public water and beach access areas.
- Regional and local agencies should acquire or maintain access to existing public beaches and water access sites that may be jeopardized by changes in land use or development activities.
- The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and local government should expand public access to water by developing parking and launch facilities at bridge crossings.
- Local, regional and state agencies should provide an additional 49 water access points in the Chesapeake Bay watershed in Virginia to meet the commitments of the Chesapeake Bay Agreement.
- Local, regional and state agencies should assess the availability of former steamboat landings in tributary streams and on the Potomac and Rappahannock rivers for water access.

- Local, regional and state agencies should implement a water trail and bicycle route from Washington's Birthplace in Westmoreland County to Ferry Farm in Stafford County to Mount Vernon in Fairfax County.
- Local and regional agencies should develop water trail segments in Richmond and Lancaster counties along Rappahannock tributaries.

**5** Local and regional agencies should develop **water-to-land access between Stratford Hall Plantation and the George Washington Birthplace National Monument**. This access would complement the existing Potomac River Water Trail part of the PHNST.

**6** The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) should develop a **canoe and kayak camping area** along the shoreline within **Westmoreland State Park**.

**7** Local and regional agencies should develop the **Monroe Bay water trail** segment incorporating James Monroe Birthplace in Westmoreland County.

**8** DCR and local and regional agencies should develop **Hughlett's Point to Dameron Marsh Kayak Trail** in Northumberland County.

**9** Local and regional agencies should develop the water trail segment for **Cat Point Creek Blueway** in Richmond County.

**10** Local and regional agencies should provide water overlooks at **Powers Land** and other bay and river resources of the region.

**11** Local, regional and state agencies should evaluate the region for potential areas to locate fishing piers. **Totuskey Creek** is a potential location for a fishing pier.

**12** Local and regional agencies should consider **Vir Mar Beach** as an enhanced beach access point with wayside access including picnic and parking areas.

### Historic and landscape resources

The economic future of the Northern Neck may be in heritage tourism and the proud preservation of historical landmarks. The region is pursuing designation as a National Heritage Area. The Northern Neck Farm Museum, Christ Church, James Monroe and George Washington birthplaces, Stratford Hall, Hughlett Tavern as well as several other points of historical significance make this region a natural setting for historic

landmark preservation. The Northern Neck Tourism Council and the Northern Neck Planning District Commission have worked to connect and promote many of the historic resources along with the culturally rich landscapes.

Consideration should be given to evaluating potential historic and landscape recommendations in this region. For more detailed information, see Chapter VII: Outdoor Programs and Initiatives, Historic and Landscape Resources. Local and regional recommendations include:

- Regional and local agencies should identify historic and archaeological resources that can be used for tourism, recreation and education. These resources should be included in local land use planning and decision-making processes to promote preservation and protection.
- Regional and local agencies should build local historic attractions, historical societies, museums and other tourism organizations in the region to include the Virginia Association of Museums, Virginia Civil War Trails, APVA Preservation Virginia, the Virginia Main Street Program and others to enhance local heritage tourism, educational and recreational offerings.
- Regional and local agencies should encourage local governments and private organizations that own historic properties in the region to manage properties effectively for long-term protection and to maximize public benefit consistent with the nature of the historic property.
- Regional and local agencies should recognize the multiple historic and cultural resources within the rural landscape through rural historic districts.
- Regional and local agencies should support the creation of other heritage area programs to promote tourism and preservation in distinctive regions.
- Local government should incorporate the National Park Service's Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail in local comprehensive plans as a way to further heritage and ecotourism in the region.

### Scenic resources

Consideration should be given to potential scenic recommendations in this region. For more detailed information, see Chapter VII: Outdoor Programs and Initiatives, Scenic Resources. Local and regional recommendations include:

- Regional and local agencies should develop corridor management plans for scenic byways,

blueways, greenways and scenic rivers to assure preservation of the scenic quality of the corridor.

- Regional and local agencies should protect the scenic value of lands adjacent to publicly owned properties, as well as the scenic value of working agricultural and forestal areas key to maintaining a sense of place and economic vitality of the region. Scenic attributes to be considered include:
  - Consider timber harvesting impacts on key viewsheds.
  - Protect viewsheds along river corridors and scenic byways.
- Consider scenic views along Virginia byways and scenic highways to enhance the visual experience of traveling.
- Regional and local agencies and organizations should assess scenic assets for this region to determine appropriate protection strategies.
- Regional and local agencies and organizations should retain cultural landscapes and views along water bodies throughout the region.
- Regional and local agencies and organizations should protect the unique scenic beauty of the Northern Neck landscape by managing growth to respect the cultural heritage and landscapes that create a unique sense of place.

### Scenic highways and Virginia byways

Opportunities to traverse Virginia's scenic and cultural landscapes are enhanced through nationally recognized designation. For more detailed information, see Chapter VII: Outdoor Programs and Initiatives, Scenic Highways and Virginia Byways.

Scenic roads recommendations for the region include:

- Regional and local agencies should recognize and nominate scenic roads for designation as Virginia byways.
- Regional and local agencies should partner with other state, local and professional organizations to develop corridor management plans to protect the scenic assets of byway corridors.
- Regional and local agencies should incorporate Virginia byways and scenic highways into local comprehensive plans and zoning ordinances to ensure viewsheds are conserved and the sense of place retained along these corridors.

- Regional and local agencies should support designation of nationally qualified historic corridors to increase civic engagement and foster heritage tourism.
- The Northern Neck Planning District Commission coordinates transportation initiatives for the region. As stated in the annual 2006-2007 planning district commission work plan, the commission should encourage localities to nominate roads for Virginia Byways designation.

The following road segments are potential Virginia Byways and should be evaluated to determine if they qualify for designation:

**13 Routes 205 and 3** in Westmoreland County.

**14 Route 360** in Richmond and Northumberland counties.

**15 Route 354** in Lancaster County.

### Scenic rivers

Currently there are no Virginia Scenic Rivers designated in the Northern Neck region. For detailed information about the Virginia's Scenic Rivers Program and its purpose, benefits and designation process, see Chapter VII: Outdoor Recreation Programs and Initiative, Scenic Rivers. Regional and local recommendations include:

- Localities should adopt planning tools (e.g., land use overlays, corridor management plans) that will afford special recognition and protection to Virginia's scenic rivers.

The following river segments are potential Virginia Scenic Rivers and should be evaluated to determine suitability for designation:

**16 The Rappahannock River** from the Route 3 bridge at Ferry Farm to the Chesapeake Bay.

**17 The Corrotoman River** in Lancaster County.

**18 Cat Point Creek** from Route 622 to its junction with the Rappahannock River.

### Watershed resources

The Northern Neck is included in both the Shenandoah-Potomac watershed and the Rappahannock watershed. For information about Virginia's watershed programs, see Chapter VII: Outdoor Programs and Initiatives, Virginia's Watershed Programs.

### **Watershed Groups in Region 17:**

- Cat Point Watershed Project
- Chesapeake Bay Foundation
- Dividing Creek Watershed Association
- Friends of Dragon Run
- Friends of Totuskey Creek
- Friends of the Rivers of Virginia
- Lancaster and Morratco Creeks Watershed Partnership
- Northumberland Association for Progressive Stewardship

Watershed recommendations include:

- Local and regional agencies and organizations should protect watersheds and broad areas of natural significance in the Dragon Run corridor.

### **Environmental and land stewardship education**

For detailed information on Environmental and Land Stewardship education, see Chapter VII: Outdoor Programs and Initiatives, Environmental and Land Stewardship Education. Environmental and land stewardship recommendations for this region include:

- Local and regional environmental education organizations should assess the outdoor environmental education facilities existing in this region and expand environmental education by providing more opportunities at the region's vast public natural areas and parks, including state parks, state forests and wildlife management areas.
- Local and regional agencies and organizations should develop cooperative partnerships with federal and state outdoor recreation providers to offer educational outreach to serve the localities and region.

### **Federal programs**

For information on federal programs affecting Virginia's outdoor recreation and conservation opportunities, see Chapter IX-A: Resource Agencies. Local and regional recommendations are listed by agency.

### **National parks**

- Local and regional government, user groups and nonprofits should work with NPS to revise policy, in order to allow mountain bikes to use appropriate national park trails.

- NPS should continue collaborative efforts through the Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Water Trails Program and PHNST to connect people to heritage, outdoor recreation, and educational opportunities and resources.
- NPS should continue PHNST trail corridor management implementing partnerships involving NPS units and local, state and regional entities. Working together, partners achieve diverse goals ranging from development of a sustainable transportation system to linking conservation lands as part of an extensive green infrastructure network.
- NPS, with local, regional and state partners, should pursue access from the Potomac River to the George Washington Birthplace National Monument as part of the PHNST water trail. This is one of the priorities of the PHNST. One of the biggest management issues for the birthplace site is preserving the cultural landscape. In addition, the birthplace should continue to work collaboratively with a number of partners on regional trail and heritage tourism efforts and the Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Water Trails Network.

### **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)**

- USFWS should continue to seek opportunities to acquire additional sites along the Potomac River to help protect eagle habitat and other natural heritage resources.
- 19 USFWS should continue to develop outdoor recreation and outreach education opportunities at the **Rappahannock River Valley National Wildlife Refuge (NWR)**. The Rappahannock River Valley NWR was established in 1996 to protect outstanding fish and wildlife habitat in and along the river. A two-year effort began in April 2006 to develop a comprehensive conservation plan for the Rappahannock River Valley NWR. This plan coordinates with ongoing programs and regional initiatives to link regional opportunities. USFWS set a refuge land protection goal of 20,000 acres in seven counties, flanking both sides of the river from Skinners Neck south to Belle Isle State Park. As of 2005, the USFWS had acquired nearly 8,000 acres from willing sellers, including 1,400 acres under conservation easement.

### **State facilities and programs**

For a discussion of state facilities and programs throughout the entire Commonwealth, see Chapter IX-B: Resource Agencies. Local and regional recommendations are listed by agency or program.

## State parks

**20 Belle Isle State Park** (733 acres) is located on the Rappahannock River in Lancaster County. The park has seven miles of frontage on the north shore of the Rappahannock, and it borders Deep and Mulberry creeks. Accommodation for special events and overnight stays are offered in the Bel Air Mansion and Guest House. The park has a boat launch on Deep Creek and a car top launch on Mulberry Creek. Picnicking and shelters are available. Diverse tidal and nontidal wetlands, lowland marshes, tidal coves and upland forests create numerous opportunities for environmental education and interpretive programming. Multi-use trails also provide access to wildlife viewing areas within the park.

Belle Isle has a 29-site full service campground, a group cabin and a new visitor center, all funded by the 2002 General Obligation Bond (GOB). The new visitor center will allow for greatly expanded interpretive and educational programming on the park's unique natural and cultural resources. The property should be evaluated to determine the feasibility of establishing mountain bike trails within the park.

With its potential for canoe-in campsites, Belle Isle should be incorporated into the NPS's Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail as well as into future Rappahannock River Water Trail initiatives.

**21 Westmoreland State Park** (1,299 acres) is located on the Potomac River in Westmoreland County. One of six original Virginia state parks established in 1936, Westmoreland park is listed on the state and national historic registers. Traditional recreational offerings include cabins, camping, swimming, picnicking, trails, and boating and fishing access. The park's natural and cultural features create ample opportunity for interpretive and educational opportunities both on land and on the river.

Additional projects are proposed in the park's master plan, such as upgraded overnight and conference facilities, which would require funding and staff support. Located on the Potomac River Water Trail, the master plan also proposes development of canoe-in camping. The park could also be a point of interest on the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail. Other trail opportunities include links between the George Washington Birthplace and Stratford Hall. An evaluation should be performed to determine if the park is a likely location for mountain bike trails.

## Future state park sites

Due to the extremely high demand for public access to the waters of the Commonwealth, any large acreage waterfront property that becomes available on the major tidal rivers or their tributaries in the region should be evaluated for potential acquisition and development as a regional or state park. Potential acquisitions should be explored along the Potomac, Little Wicomico and Great Wicomico rivers in Northumberland County.

## State natural area preserves

The following natural area preserves are located within this district: Hickory Hollow in Lancaster County and Bush Mill Stream, Dameron Marsh and Hughlett Point in Northumberland County.

DCR has, as of November 2006, documented 168 occurrences of 29 rare species and natural communities in the Northern Neck Planning District. Nine species are globally rare and three are federally threatened or endangered. One hundred and one conservation sites have been identified in the district; only 31 sites (31 percent) have received any level of protection through ownership or management by state, federal and non-government organizations.

DCR recommends that all unprotected conservation sites, and all unprotected portions of partially protected sites, be targeted for future land conservation efforts. The appropriate method of protection will vary with each site but may include placing the site on Virginia's Registry of Natural Areas, developing a voluntary management agreement with the landowner, securing a conservation easement through a local land trust, acquiring the site through a locality or local land trust, dedicating the site as a natural area preserve with the current owner, or acquiring the site as a state-owned natural area preserve.

Within Region 17, DCR is particularly interested in protecting:

- Lands around Hughlett Point and Dameron Marsh natural area preserves.
- Sandy beach habitats and associated wetlands and uplands that support the threatened northeastern beach tiger beetle.
- Bald eagle nesting habitat.
- Based on analysis of the site's carrying capacity, additional public access is recommended at Dameron Marsh.

### State forests

- Local and regional agencies should encourage the use of Department of Forestry (DOF) Best Management Practices in floodplain forest areas, particularly those adjacent to state-designated scenic waterways.
- Local and regional agencies should use DOF properties as field classrooms to help with educational programs.
- Local and regional agencies should coordinate with DOF and seek the assistance of local trail and river user organizations to develop forest trails and publish maps for each state forest, as well as establish greenways and blueways for public use.
- Local and regional agencies should investigate opportunities to acquire fee simple ownership or easements to conserve working farms and forests in the region.
- Local and regional agencies should work with DOF to create defensible space around buildings to reduce the risk of wild fires through the DOF Fire Wise Program.
- Localities should work with DOF on education and monitoring of tree diseases and other pests that could weaken forested environments.
- Agricultural lands should be targeted for reforestation to protect the water quality of the area and limit the effects of erosion.

**22** DOF should provide hiking, picnicking and nature study at the **Virginia Tech Forest Management Station** in Richmond County. This state forest includes 55 acres suitable for dispersed recreation.

**23** DOF should develop conservation education opportunities and passive recreational activities, including trails, at **Chilton Woods State Forest** in Lancaster County.

### State fish and wildlife management areas (WMA)

- The Northern Neck Planning District Commission's annual work plan for 2006-2007 indicates they will continue to assist the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF) with further planning, development and marketing of the Coastal Wildlife and Birding Trail.
- DGIF should continue to work with local and regional governments to support the Birding and Wildlife Trail program.

### Virginia Marine Resources Commission (VMRC)

- VMRC should continue promotion of saltwater recreational fishing opportunities in the Commonwealth through continued construction of new reef sites and augmentation of existing artificial fishing reef sites.
- VMRC should increase public access to salt water sites.

### Other state lands

For a discussion of other state lands, see Chapter IX-C: Resource Agencies.

Other state-owned lands that contain significant undeveloped open space that may have some potential for local recreational use have not been identified in Region 17.

**24** The Virginia Outdoors Foundation (VOF) and the property owner should maintain the **Vera Knols Tract**, located in Northumberland County, as a natural area.

**25** Recreational access at **Rappahannock Community College** in Richmond County should be improved and expanded. The campus has 118 acres of land and is already on the Virginia Wildlife and Birding Trail.

### Transportation programs

- Local and regional agencies should develop alternatives to the use of private automobiles for daily activities. Transit systems, bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, improved community design, as well as a change in people's attitudes toward transportation alternatives will be needed for the transportation system of the future to meet capacity needs and energy constraints.
- Local and regional agencies should work with the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) to implement Context Sensitive Solutions that accommodate multiple transportation modes.
- Local and regional agencies should recognize the need for a network of low-speed, low-volume roadways used by equestrians, pedestrians and cyclists, and they should include protections for this network in their comprehensive plan.
- Local and regional agencies should encourage the development of a permanent process for integrating the recommendations of local public health agencies, and they should include "active living" opportu-



nities into all phases of transportation planning, land use planning and project design.

- The Northern Neck Planning District Commission coordinates transportation initiatives for the region. Their annual work plan for 2006-2007 indicates the Rideshare Program will continue. The 2007 VOP recommends support of the planning district commission's commitment to continuing work on regional multi-use trail networks, the PHNST and other water trails.
- Local, regional and state agencies and organizations should provide multi-use paths and prepare educational programs emphasizing the sharing of roadways by motorists and bicyclists.
- The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) should construct road shoulders for bicyclists and pedestrians.

### Local and regional parks and recreation departments

For a discussion of local and regional parks and recreation departments, see Chapter IX-D: Resource Agencies. Local and regional recommendations include:

- Explore reclamation of abandoned landfills into new and needed parks.
- Each of the counties and towns of Region 17 should consider establishing local parks and recreation departments. The purpose of the departments would be to provide quality recreation programs, but also to facilitate the acquisition and development of parks and the conservation of dwindling open space and waterfront. Parks and recreation services provide a myriad of benefits to communities and are vital to the health and well being of local citizens. Although not a mandated service from the Commonwealth, these departments can provide many social, economic and environmental benefits to communities.
- Local governments and agencies should consider cooperative management for the recreational use of private, corporate, and state or federally owned lands in order to increase local access and meet outdoor recreation needs.

- Local and regional agencies should initiate development of a system of local and regional parks that will supplement the base of state and federally owned lands. Currently there are no regional parks that are locally owned or operated in partnership with multiple organizations and agencies. It is important to meet the outdoor recreation needs for a growing region by increasing local and regional opportunities.

### Private sector

This region is a major destination area for vacationers. Much of the demand for outdoor recreation is met by the private sector. For a discussion of the private sector, see Chapter IX-E: Resource Agencies. The following recommendations pertain to this region:

- Local and regional agencies and organizations should continue support for the Northern Neck Tourism Council and tourism efforts related to outdoor recreation, heritage and ecotourism, which is a component of the Northern Neck Planning District Commission's annual work plan for 2006-2007.
- The private sector should explore opportunities for additional water access for boating and fishing.
- Entrepreneurs should evaluate the need for facilities such as marinas, dry storage areas, fishing piers, bait and tackle shops, and food service establishments to support water access activities.
- Entrepreneurs should evaluate the potential for creating and marketing water-to-land access points that provide safe areas for boats to dock for overnight stays, meals or sightseeing.
- The private sector should evaluate the potential and marketing strategy for market boat-in bed and breakfasts.
- The private sector should explore opportunities to convert abandoned seafood processing facilities into water-based recreational developments.



*George Washington Birthplace National Park. Photo by DHR.*

**Table X-17. Region 17 ( Northern Neck Planning District) Existing and Projected Outdoor Recreation Needs**

Activity	Activity Days	Demand	Units	Supply	2010 Needs	2020 Needs
Baseball	82,542	16	fields	16	0	2
Basketball	94,771	22	goals	3	19	22
Bicycling	137,570	10	miles	NI		
Mountain	21,400	2	miles	NI		
Other	116,171	8	miles	NI		
Lake, river and bay use (combined)	729,887	11,773	water acres	291,921	-280,148	-278,704
Power boating	325,074	7,835	water acres	S		
Sailing	48,914	423	water acres	S		
Saltwater fishing	253,741	1,427	water acres	S		
Jet ski, personal watercraft	71,078	1,114	water acres	S		
Water skiing, towed on water	31,081	974	water acres	S		
Camping	69,855	412	sites	2,064	-1,652	-1,602
Tent camping	26,699	157	sites	282	-125	-105
Developed camping	43,156	255	sites	1,782	-1,527	-1,496
Fitness trail use	31,081	2	mile trails	2	0	1
Fields (combined)	143,685	30	fields	4	26	30
Football	47,385	10	fields	4	6	7
Soccer	96,299	20	fields	-	20	23
Stream use (combined)	202,483	95	stream miles	18	77	89
Freshwater fishing	106,795	75	stream miles	S		
Human-powered boating	58,697	15	stream miles	S		
Rafting	2,344	0	stream miles	S		
Tubing	34,647	5	stream miles	S		
Golfing	97,064	3	courses	126	-4	-3
Hiking, backpacking	60,531	31	trail miles	17	14	18
Horseback riding	18,037	8	miles	-	8	9
In-line skating	3,872	0	miles	NI		
Jogging, running	252,722	20	mile trails	NI		
Nature study, programs	22,317	3	sites	-	3	4

**Note:** Demand multipliers used to create this chart are based on the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation's 2006 *Virginia Outdoors Survey* as measured at the regional level. Additional analysis is required to adjust these results for local conditions.

**NA:** not applicable, no standard needed

**S:** same as combined

**NS:** not inventoried separately

**NI:** not inventoried

**( - )** indicates surplus

**Table X-17. Region 17 ( Northern Neck Planning District) Existing and Projected Outdoor Recreation Needs – continued**

Activity	Activity Days	Demand	Units	Supply	2010 Needs	2020 Needs
Picnicking away from home	67,257	175	tables	320	-145	-124
Skateboarding	18,343	6	sites	NI		
Snow skiing or snowboarding	12,840	0	ski lifts	-	0	0
Softball	56,047	10	fields	6	4	5
Sunbathing, relaxing on beach	223,170	16	beach acres	33	-17	-15
Swimming	509,520	37		NI		
Outdoor area	296,031	30	beach acres	33	-3	1
Outdoor pools	144,194	6	pools	11	-5	-4
Indoor pools	69,295	1	pools	1	0	0
Tennis	25,476	16	courts	16	0	2
Used a playground	110,566	16	sites	6	10	12
Visiting gardens	23,998	3	sites	NI		
Visiting historic sites	60,735	5	sites	NI		
Visiting natural areas	101,089	17	sites	NI		
Volleyball	51,665	15	courts	-	15	17
Hunting	117,699	19,301	acres	1,000	18,301	20,668
Drive for pleasure	361,352	NA	NA	NI		
Driving motorcycle off road	23,846	11	miles	-	11	12
Driving 4-wheel-drive off road	11,464	NA	NA	NS		
Walking for pleasure	1,577,474	NA	NA	NI		
Bird watching	48,404	NA		NI		
Other	16,407	NA	NA	NI		

**Note:** Demand multipliers used to create this chart are based on the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation's 2006 *Virginia Outdoors Survey* as measured at the regional level. Additional analysis is required to adjust these results for local conditions.

**NA:** not applicable, no standard needed

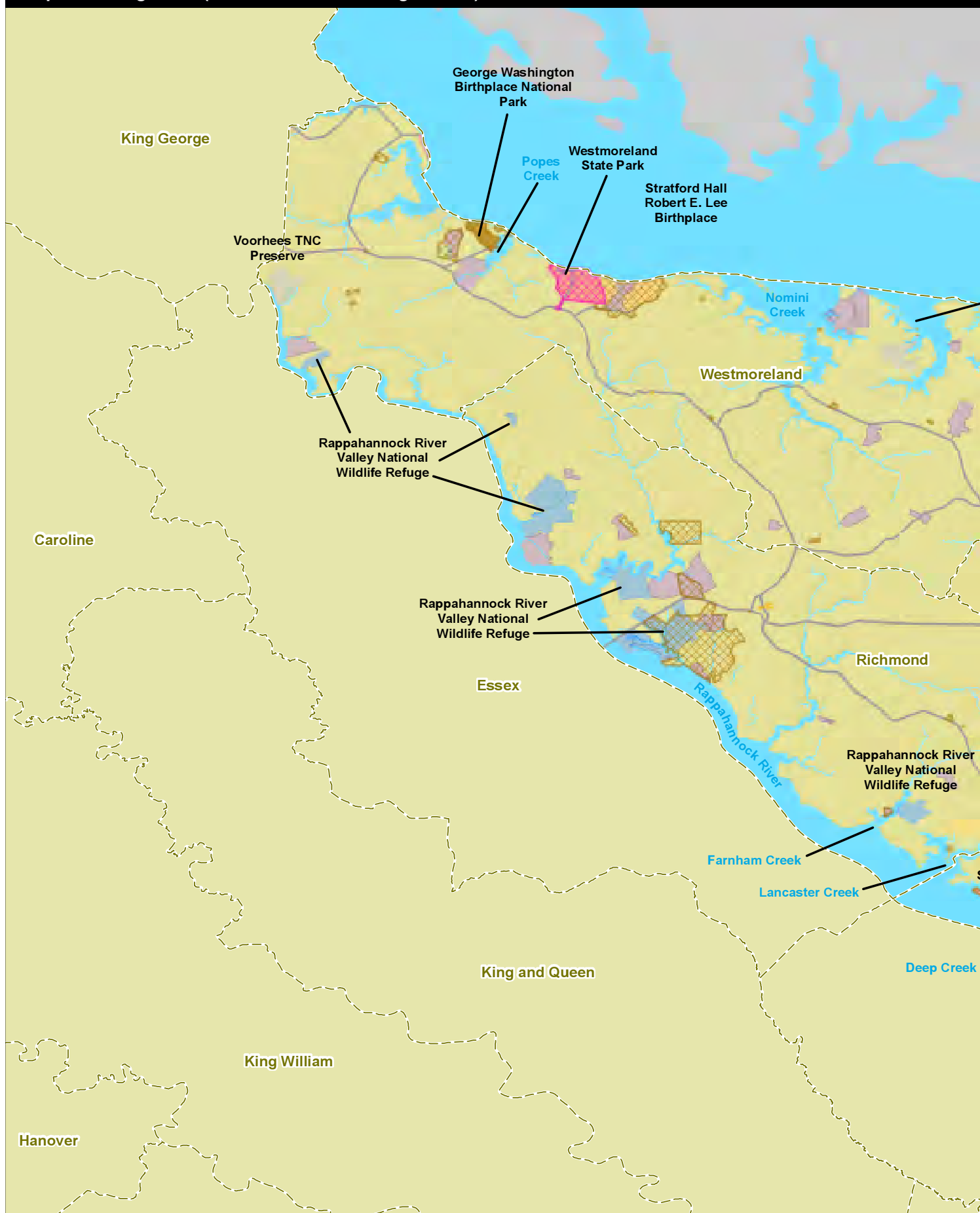
**S:** same as combined

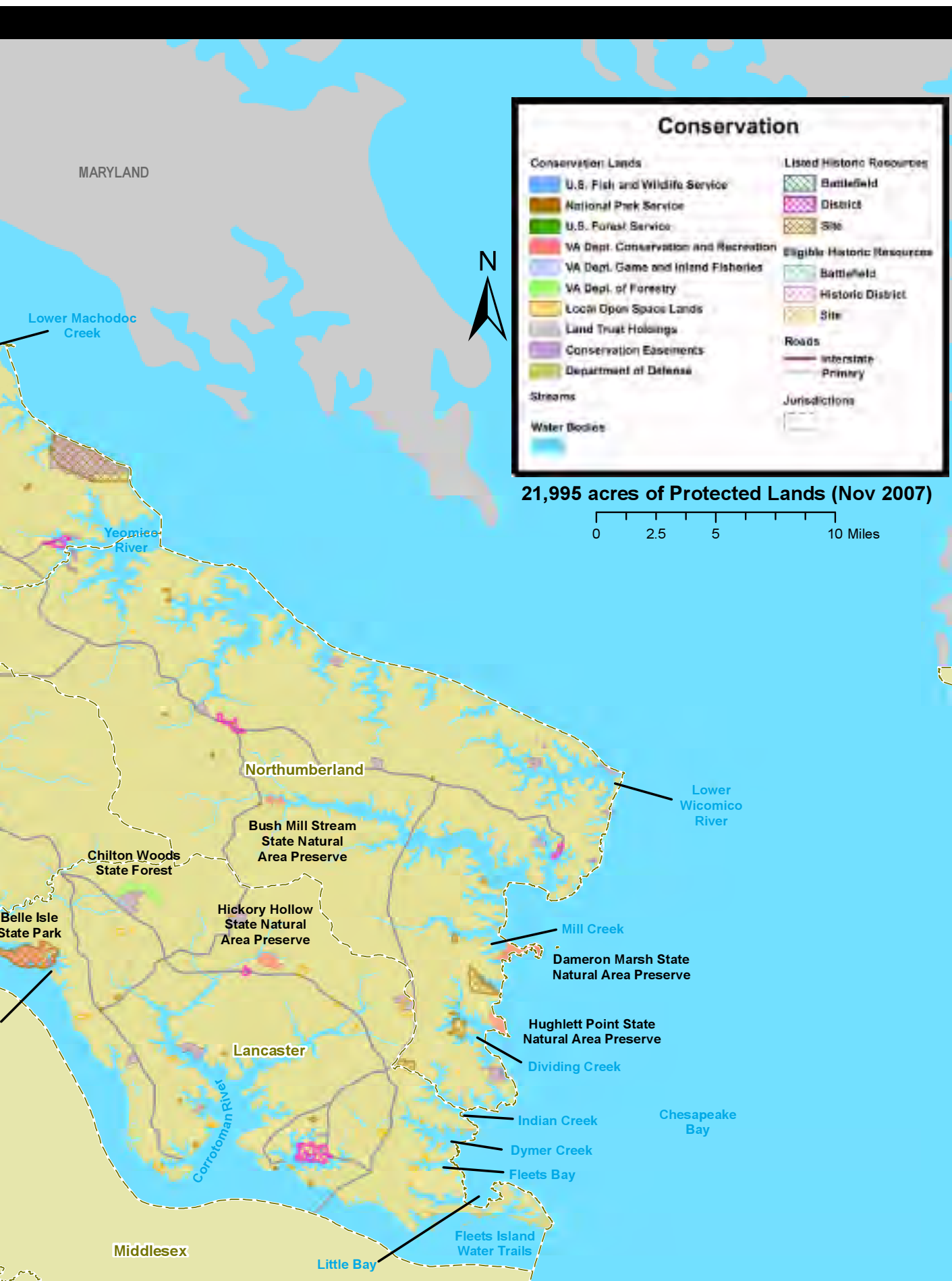
**NS:** not inventoried separately

**NI:** not inventoried

**( - )** indicates surplus

Map X-34. Region 17 (Northern Neck Planning District) Conservation Lands





Map X-35. Region 17 (Northern Neck Planning District) Outdoor Recreation

